



NORTH ADAMS

Berkshire County

[NARRATIVE](#)

[GEOGRAPHY](#)

[GOVERNMENT](#)

[DEMOGRAPHICS](#)

[HOUSING CHARACTERISTICS](#)

[TRANSPORTATION](#)

[CULTURE AND RECREATION](#)

[MISCELLANEOUS](#)



NARRATIVE

Narrative

The City of North Adams is sited in the valleys created by the confluence of the north and south branches of the Hoosac River. It is an industrial community with narrow twisting streets that climb steep hills. The river valleys were known to be subject to flooding, so no large farming community was developed in the area, but the water power of the rivers was available for industry.

In 1760, the Commonwealth sold the area to three men if they would develop it. They did...with lumber mills exporting high quality pine boards, grist mills, blacksmith shop, fulling mill, cut nail makers, brickyards and textile mills. Many settlers from Rhode Island with textile experience in power looms moved to the town, aiding in the creation of its industrial economy. Development, however, was slow because the town was cut off from the eastern portion of the state by the Hoosac Mountain Range and hampered by a lack of capital. In the late 1820's the first cotton print mill was established and in 1846 the first rail line to Pittsfield was opened. Blast furnaces and shoes were manufactured in town and the Hoosac Tunnel, direct rail line between North Adams and Fitchburg, was begun in 1851 and completed in 1875 using the city as the headquarters for the tunnel operations.

The Civil War stimulated the shoe and textile operations and handsome Greek Revival, Second Empire, and Italianate homes remain as testimony to the fortunes that were made. The Blackinton Mansion, an outstanding example of Second Empire design, is now the city library. The growth of the mills led to development of the city as a regional commercial center in the Berkshires. Residential neighborhoods began climbing the hills about 1850 and the city is now known for its decorated slate roofs and towers. Mill owners built a large number of multi-family houses for their workers, who were mainly immigrant French Canadians, Italians and Irish. By the later 19th century, shoes and boots had grown to be more significant to North Adams' economy than textiles. North Adams State College was established in 1894 and Sprague Electrical Works moved to town in 1929. North Adams is more diversified in modern times and much less of an industrial community, with a major effort underway to create the largest Museum of Modern Art in the country on a site in the community.

(Seal supplied by community. Narrative based on information provided by the Massachusetts Historical Commission)



GEOGRAPHY

Location

Northwestern Massachusetts, bordered by Clarksburg on the north, Adams on the south, Florida on the east, and Williamstown on the west. North Adams is 22 miles north of Pittsfield; 133 miles northwest of Boston; 46 miles from Albany, New York; and about 133 miles from New York City.

Total Area: 20.57 sq. miles

Land Area: 20.44 sq. miles

Population: 16,797

Density: 822 per sq. mile

Climate

(National Climatic Data Center)

(Great Barrington Station)

Normal temperature in January.....20.1°F

Normal temperature in July.....68.1°F

Normal annual precipitation.....44.8"

U.S.G.S. Topographical Plates

North Adams, Williamstown

Regional Planning Agency

Berkshire County

Metropolitan Statistical Area

(1993 Definition)



GOVERNMENT

Municipal Offices

Main Number: (413) 662-3000

[Telephone Numbers for Public Information](#)

Form of Government

Mayor-Council

Year Incorporated

As a town: 1878

As a city: 1895

Registered Voters (Secretary of State 1994)

	Number	%	
Total Registered	6,866		
Democrats	2,674	38.9	%
Republicans	765	11.1	%
Other parties	13	0.2	%
Unenrolled Voters	3,414	49.7	%

Legislators

[Senators and Representatives by City and Town](#)



DEMOGRAPHICS

Table DP-1. Profile of General Demographic Characteristics: 2000

Geographic Area: North Adams city, Massachusetts

[For information on confidentiality protection, nonsampling error, and definitions, see text]

Subject	Number	Percent	Subject	Number	Percent
Total population.....	14,681	100.0	HISPANIC OR LATINO AND RACE		
SEX AND AGE			Total population.....	14,681	100.0
Male.....	6,794	46.3	Hispanic or Latino (of any race).....	298	2.0
Female.....	7,887	53.7	Mexican.....	39	0.3
Under 5 years.....	802	5.5	Puerto Rican.....	111	0.8
5 to 9 years.....	898	6.1	Cuban.....	17	0.1
10 to 14 years.....	957	6.5	Other Hispanic or Latino.....	131	0.9
15 to 19 years.....	1,186	8.1	Not Hispanic or Latino.....	14,383	98.0
20 to 24 years.....	1,174	8.0	White alone.....	13,800	94.0
25 to 34 years.....	1,704	11.6	RELATIONSHIP		
35 to 44 years.....	2,199	15.0	Total population.....	14,681	100.0
45 to 54 years.....	1,801	12.3	In households.....	13,928	94.9
55 to 59 years.....	648	4.4	Householder.....	6,311	43.0
60 to 64 years.....	609	4.1	Spouse.....	2,529	17.2
65 to 74 years.....	1,261	8.6	Child.....	3,846	26.2
75 to 84 years.....	1,048	7.1	Own child under 18 years.....	3,067	20.8
85 years and over.....	394	2.7	Other relatives.....	428	2.9
Median age (years).....	38.0	(X)	Under 18 years.....	129	0.9
18 years and over.....	11,399	77.6	Nonrelatives.....	814	5.5
Male.....	5,186	35.3	Unmarried partner.....	438	3.0
Female.....	6,213	42.3	In group quarters.....	753	5.1
21 years and over.....	10,544	71.8	Institutionalized population.....	109	0.7
62 years and over.....	3,058	20.8	Noninstitutionalized population.....	644	4.4
65 years and over.....	2,703	18.4	HOUSEHOLD BY TYPE		
Male.....	969	6.6	Total households.....	6,311	100.0
Female.....	1,734	11.8	Family households (families).....	3,634	57.6
RACE			With own children under 18 years.....	1,678	26.6
One race.....	14,469	98.6	Married-couple family.....	2,529	40.1
White.....	13,946	95.0	With own children under 18 years.....	972	15.4
Black or African American.....	245	1.7	Female householder, no husband present.....	839	13.3
American Indian and Alaska Native.....	39	0.3	With own children under 18 years.....	563	8.9
Asian.....	117	0.8	Nonfamily households.....	2,677	42.4
Asian Indian.....	34	0.2	Householder living alone.....	2,286	36.2
Chinese.....	25	0.2	Householder 65 years and over.....	1,062	16.8
Filipino.....	1	-	Households with individuals under 18 years.....	1,789	28.3
Japanese.....	6	-	Households with individuals 65 years and over.....	1,986	31.5
Korean.....	10	0.1	Average household size.....	2.21	(X)
Vietnamese.....	16	0.1	Average family size.....	2.87	(X)
Other Asian ¹	25	0.2	HOUSING OCCUPANCY		
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander.....	5	-	Total housing units.....	7,088	100.0
Native Hawaiian.....	1	-	Occupied housing units.....	6,311	89.0
Guamanian or Chamorro.....	4	-	Vacant housing units.....	777	11.0
Samoa.....	-	-	For seasonal, recreational, or		
Other Pacific Islander ²	-	-	occasional use.....	27	0.4
Some other race.....	117	0.8	Homeowner vacancy rate (percent).....	2.7	(X)
Two or more races.....	212	1.4	Rental vacancy rate (percent).....	10.9	(X)
Race alone or in combination with one			HOUSING TENURE		
or more other races: ³			Occupied housing units.....	6,311	100.0
White.....	14,150	96.4	Owner-occupied housing units.....	3,284	52.0
Black or African American.....	356	2.4	Renter-occupied housing units.....	3,027	48.0
American Indian and Alaska Native.....	109	0.7	Average household size of owner-occupied units.....	2.43	(X)
Asian.....	134	0.9	Average household size of renter-occupied units.....	1.96	(X)
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander.....	12	0.1			
Some other race.....	163	1.1			

- Represents zero or rounds to zero. (X) Not applicable.

¹ Other Asian alone, or two or more Asian categories.

² Other Pacific Islander alone, or two or more Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander categories.

³ In combination with one or more of the other races listed. The six numbers may add to more than the total population and the six percentages may add to more than 100 percent because individuals may report more than one race.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000.



HOUSING CHARACTERISTICS

Home Sales (Banker & Tradesman) -

[Town Stats - Free market Statistics](#)

Subsidized Housing Units (DHCD 1998)

[DHCD Subsidized Housing Inventory](#)

Subsidized Housing Units: The number of housing units which count toward the municipality's 10% goal for low- and moderate-income housing. It includes both subsidized affordable units and market rate units in certain eligible subsidized developments.

Public Housing Units (DHCD 1999)

Conventional State: 16

Conventional Federal: 306

Rental Assistance(DHCD 1999)

State (MRVP: 9

Federal (Section 8): 301



TRANSPORTATION

TRANSPORTATION AND ACCESS

North Adams is situated in Berkshire County, a region of hills and low mountains that widen to create the Berkshire Valley in the south. The major cities and towns are linked together by U.S. Route 7. North Adams and Pittsfield are major points of entry for rail freight into Massachusetts, and the region has several commercial airports.

Major Highways

Principal highways are State Route 2, the Mohawk Trail traversing northern Massachusetts in an E-W direction, and State Route 8, which runs N-S to Pittsfield.

Rail

The Springfield Terminal Railway offers freight service to North Adams.
Contact number: (508) 663-1073

Bus

North Adams is a member of the Berkshire Regional Transit Authority (BRTA), which provides fixed route service to Adams, Cheshire, Lanesborough, Pittsfield, and Williamstown. Paratransit services are available for the elderly and disabled. Peter Pan Bus Lines offers service to Springfield, connecting to Worcester, Boston and Bennington, VT.

Other

Harriman & West Airport, a General Aviation (GA) facility located 3 mi W of North Adams, has a 4,300' x 100' asphalt runway. Instrument approaches available: None.



CULTURE AND RECREATION

LIBRARIES

[Board of Library Commissioners On-line Library Catalog](#)

MUSEUMS

(American Association of Museums)

None

RECREATION

[Telephone Numbers for Public Information](#)

Recreational Facilities (Recreational sites and activities)

[Department of Environmental Management Recreation Section](#)



MISCELLANEOUS

HEALTH FACILITIES

(Dept. of Public Health 1992)

Hospitals

North Adams Regional Hospital

Long Term Care

None

Hospices

Hospice Of Northern Berkhsire

Hospice Of Northern Berkshire

Rest Homes

Willowood N H Of North Adams

UTILITIES

[Telephone Numbers for Public Utilities](#)

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NOTE: The COMMUNITY PROFILE draws information from a diversity of sources. The main source of information is listed under each section. In some instances comments submitted by the municipality were incorporated to correct and/or enhance the information obtained from the main source. However, no changes were made to those data bases which must be consistent throughout the state. DHCD has made efforts to ensure the accuracy of all data in the COMMUNITY PROFILES, but cannot take responsibility for any consequences arising from the use of the information contained in this document.